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Education and Training of Youths: A Panacea for Sustainable Development of Andoni (Obolo) Nation in Niger Delta, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The socio-political and economic development of any nation around the globe is anchored on education and training as no nation can rise beyond its level of education. Education and training therefore serve as effective weapons for positive change in all aspects and ramifications of the society. This paper therefore discusses the roles of education and training in fostering sustainable development of the Obolo nation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In this paper, key concepts of education and training, youths, technical vocational education and training, sustainable development are highlighted after which it was recommended among others that the Nigerian Government and the private sectors should support the education of aspiring brilliant youths of Andoni with scholarship offers to enable them further their education and secondly, youths should be encouraged to acquire relevant skills capable of creating employment for them in order to overcome poverty and criminal activities prevalent in Nigeria.

Keywords: Training, youth, sustainable development, vocation, technical education, Niger Delta

1. Introduction

Youth refers to the category of young people who act as the livewire of every society. The youths are veritable tools for economic development and social transformation. Youth as defined by the National Policy on Youth Development (as cited in Olelewe (2016) is any individual who is a citizen of Federal Republic of Nigeria between the ages of 18-35). Similarly, Akande (2011) defines youth as an age of adventure; a bridge between the adolescent and the adults or old age who constitute the bulk of the workforce in any country in the world. In the view of Okwelle and Ayonmike (2014), youths are the engine room for meaningful development in any country. In Nigeria, youths formed two third 2/3 of the nation's population which implies that they form the active workforce of the nation. According to the National Population Commission (NPC) (2007), about 80 million which represents 60% of Nigerian Population is made of the youths. These youths are very active and willing to contribute their quota to the economic development of Nigeria. However, they are the most affected by poverty and unemployment. About 80% of Nigerian youths are unemployed (NPC, 2007). According to Owo (2017), youth unemployment metamorphosed into societal ills such as restiveness, hooliganism, thuggery, rape, armed robbery, prostitution, kidnapping, cultism prostitution, smoking, alcoholism, examination malpractice, among others. These vices which are prevalent in virtually all nooks and crannies of Nigeria which Andoni (Obolo) is part are mostly carried out by the young people. One major reason for which lawlessness and crime thrive in Andoni is inability of most Obolo youths to access adequate quality formal education and relevant technical and vocational education that can train them in life skills capable of generating employment for them. This menace of inadequate education and training of the youths resulted to under-development of the Obolo nation, a peculiar nation located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The Niger Delta is composed of nine Nigerian states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers having a population of about 30 million people (Chizoba, Gwen, & Chike, 2012). The region is made up of 185 local government areas having over 800 communities from 12 major ethnic groups including the Ijaws, Yorubas, Ibos, amongst others. Niger Delta region is described as one of the most fragile ecosystem in the world serving as Africa's largest delta and the third world largest mangrove forest (Chizoba *et al.*, 2012). It has one of the largest wetlands in the world, with about 2,370 km² consisting of rivers, islands, creeks, swampy terrain and estuaries with the stagnant swamps covering about 8,600 km² and the coastline spanning of over 450 km. The mangrove forest covers 54,000 km² of the region; while the landmass is over 70,006 km² (Chizoba *et al.*, 2012).

1.1. The Concept of Education

1.1.1. Origin of Education

The word 'education' was derived from a Latin word 'educare' or 'educere'. Educare means to make. According to Amaele (2005), education refers to the process of transforming an individual from nothing to something. The training

processes of the individual begins from birth and continues in the institutions of learning through the process of schooling and terminates at death. Educere on the other hand means 'to lead out' or 'to uphold' or 'to build'. Education in this sense therefore refers to the act of nurturing, guiding and bringing to fruition the intellectual development of an individual (Okoh, 2003). Education characterized the development of human potentialities and a tool for the advancement of individual's social standing and material well-being (Adiele, Leigha and Abraham, 2010).

1.1.2. Definitions of Education

Education is defined as an aspect of socialization which involves the acquisition of knowledge and learning of skills capable of shaping beliefs, and moral values (Halalambos & Holborn, 2004). according to Castle cited in Adiele et. al (2010), education is all that happens to us from the day we are born to the day we die. Furthermore, O' Connor (1985) described education as the process by which society through schools, colleges and universities deliberately transmit their cultural heritage from generation to generation. Education in the words of Ake (1998) refers to the process of leading out the mind to give free rein to the creative energies and to offer opportunities for self-realization. According to Obuanya (2007), education should be seen as an articulation of informal opportunities for self-improvement, non-formal structures for the inculcation and sustenance of basic life skills and formal systems for the awakening and continuous development of the human potentials. Education is the process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural setting and heritage in order to foster continuously the well-being of mankind and guarantee its survival against the unpredictable. Thus, from all these definitions of education by various authors, we can deduce that:

- Education is a process that starts from birth and ends at death.
- Education is the totality of culture which a society transmits to its younger generation for continuity.
- Education is the totality of life's experiences.
- Education is the process of developing knowledge, skills and competencies for individual and collective societal development.
- Education refines and regulates human behavior in the society.
- Education enables the individuals to acquire knowledge, abilities, skills or behavior for proper functioning in the society.
- Education can be acquired through formal, non-formal and informal institutional training.

According to the Federal Government of Nigeria's national policy on education (NPE) (2013), no nation can rise above its educational system. Therefore, a nation is the product of its educational system. Every society therefore achieves what it wants to achieve via education. To further buttress the role of education in national transformation and development, Martin Luther King, cited in Aguba (2006) cautions that the prosperity of a country or nation depends not on the abundance of its revenues, nor on the beauty of its public buildings but rather in the number of citizens well-developed in character through educational enlightenment.

1.1.3. Aspects of Education

According to Okoh (2003), education is used in three aspects namely:

- Education as a process
- Education as a product
- Education as a discipline.

1.1.3.1. Education as a Process

Education as a process engages some activities and sets of actions resulting to a change in the behavior of a person. Here, education is seen as an activity rather than a concept and it involves the acts of teaching, learning, experiencing, assessment, testing, evaluation and other actions geared towards the enhancement of all-round development in knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes, and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society.

1.1.3.2. Education as a Product

Education as a product refers to the production function of education in producing educated individuals. Here, education performs similar roles as the production industries or factories by producing human beings who possess skills, knowledge and desirable attitudes for the transformation of society. Therefore, all the educated individuals in the society are products of education.

1.1.3.3. Education as a Discipline

Education as a discipline refers to a course of study in schools. education as a discipline is used to describe a body of knowledge to be imparted and taught in the school. Here, education exposes the individual to educational concepts and various career options in education.

1.1.4. Types of Education

There are four types of education according to Adiele *et. al* (2010) which are:

- Indigenous or traditional education.
- Formal education.

- Informal education.
- Non-formal or Semi-formal education.

1.1.4.1. Indigenous/Traditional Education

This is the type of education obtainable in any given traditional society in which values, norms, customs, beliefs, traditions, ethics, values etc. peculiar to such society are shared and transmitted to younger generations. All such education pertaining to home training and skills acquisition are known as indigenous or traditional education. This type of education is still very relevant and necessary in our society today to give a sense of direction to the younger people in morals, communication, appearance, relationships among others.

1.1.4.2. Formal Education

This type of education is very organized and well-planned with adequate curriculum content, subjects, teachers, facilities and structures in which at its successful completion, a certificate is awarded. In formal education, organized teaching and learning activities take place in schools, colleges and universities.

1.1.4.3. Informal Education

This is the type of education that occurs when we learn from our personal experiences or that of others such as friends, parents, peers, social environments, daily experiences, observation and corrections. Here, no prescribed rules and regulations govern learning. Informal education may occur anywhere at any given time as it is not restricted to a confined place.

1.1.4.4. Non-Formal Education/Semi-Formal Education

Non-formal education also known as Semi-formal education is the education that does not follow any planned and regular educational system approach. It is not formal education completely but it has some elements of it by aiming at meeting the learning needs of youths and adults who are not privileged to acquire formal education. Non-formal education includes adult literacy, skills acquisition among others.

2. Concept of Training

Training as defined by Adiele *et. al.* (2010) refers to the act of imparting into someone a set of skills that will enhance the performance of operation. Training inculcates into the trainee requisite knowledge and skills for productive work in the industries. Training is one of the processes of acquiring education. Training of youths for self-reliance and entrepreneurship development can be done through technical vocational education and training (TVET). Quality and relevant vocational education and training can provide the youths with required competencies, knowledge and skills for the jobs of today or tomorrow. Provision of relevant job skills can serve as a robust means of empowering the youths especially in Andoni for self-employment and development. Adequate training in skills supports decent work, more equitable and inclusive growth, and serves as the bridge between education and labour market thereby supporting the transition from youth into adulthood. It will interest us to know that youths constitute the greater part of the world's population having over 1.2 billion people aged 16-24. The task of developing these youths to become proficient at work is one of the greatest developmental challenges of our era. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development having recognized the pivotal role of skill training for the young people has set numerous ambitious targets under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education and (SDG) 8 on decent work and economic growth.

2.1. Concept of Technical Vocational Education and Training

Technical vocational education and training (TVET) as defined by UNESCO (2002) is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Ayonmike and Okeke (2015) defined TVET as that branch of education that uses information technology and globalization to impart technical and vocational skills to prospective industrial workers either at the foundational level or entrepreneurs. Ukula in Sofoluwe (2013) conceived TVET as a highly useful education as its occupation content is such that the trainee acquires skills, attitudes, interest and knowledge to perform socially and economically work that is beneficial to him and the society at large. TVET ensures the provision of skills and knowledge which serve as tools for the socio-economic development of any nation (Goel, 2010). Afeti (2010) opined that Technical vocational education and training is very crucial in the training and development of skilled entrepreneurial workforce required for the ever-changing technological work environment. In addition, one of the goals of TVET as contained in the national policy on education, NPE (2013) is to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels. Okoye and Okwelle (2013) submitted that TVET is mainly for those who will not only acquire it but also profit at it. In essence, human capacity building in skill-based technological areas is achievable through TVET. This fact is buttressed by Ezeani & Urama (2014) who opined that TVET is needed for sustainable economic and industrial development of youths in Nigeria as a whole. Akpan and Umana (2017) posit that the future of any nation does not only depend on its enormous natural resources but also on the development of the technical skills and competence of her citizens to harness and utilize the available resources effectively so as to achieve sustainable development.

3. Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development according to the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2012) implies meeting the needs of the present generation without putting at risk the capacity of future generations to meet theirs. Sustainable development is seen as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without mortgaging the needs of future generations (Akpan & William, 2014). In the views of Jhingan (2005), sustainable development is the development that is continuous in improving the quality of life of all people via increase in real income per capita, improvement in education, health, natural environmental resources, etc. In Andoni, the youths need steady sources of income for continuous development which is why it is necessary for them to embrace skill training as provided by TVET for self-employment and productivity. TVET therefore serves as a reliable alternative for the development of Obolo (Andoni) youths in this 21st century as diverse skills capable of making them economically viable can be acquired via it. Consequently, effective education and training programmes for Andoni youths will undoubtedly reduce unemployment, poverty and criminality in Obolo nation and at the same time triggers sustainable development within all communities that constitute the Obolo ethnic nationality.

4. Conclusion

Education and training are two essential elements that can trigger societal transformation in any nation. Education and the level of educational development in a nation constitute the basis for socio-economic development of that nation. While education brings enlightenment and awareness leading to the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and values, training on the other hand entails development of the individual's potentialities and abilities in relevant skill areas or trade for self-development which also enhances job creation and accessibility. Applying these two elements of education and training to achieving youths' development will undoubtedly bring about positive changes in the socio-economic and political domains in Nigeria generally and Andoni in particular.

5. Recommendations

From the study, the following key points are recommended:

- Government should set up vocational skills acquisition centers in all major communities in Andoni for job creation and economic development of Obolo land.
- Non-governmental organizations should endeavor to carry out sensitization awareness campaigns to educate youths of Obolo of the need to acquire quality education and skills for self-development.
- Government and the private sectors should support the education of intelligent youths of Andoni with scholarship offers to enable them further their education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- Government and public spirited individuals should support industrious youths with financial assistance to enable them establish their own businesses.
- Nigerian Government should further strengthen the local content policy to enable skilled youths of Andoni secure paid employment in oil/gas industries operating in the area.

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